

HOUSE BILL 1137

By Grills

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 4; Title 5; Title 8; Title 58 and Title 68, relative to public officials.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 68-2-609, is amended by deleting the section and substituting the following:

(a) Except as provided in subsection (b), the county health officer may order:

(1) The quarantine of a place or person, if the county health officer finds that quarantine is necessary to protect the public health from an epidemic;

(2) The closure of a public establishment, facility, or building, if the county health officer finds unsanitary conditions of such a nature and extent to significantly threaten the public health. For purposes of this subdivision (a)(2), "unsanitary" means unclean and not free of agents of infection; or

(3) The closure of a public establishment, facility, or building, if the county health officer is otherwise authorized by law to take that action.

(b) The county health officer shall not issue an order under subsection (a) that closes or limits the lawful operations of a church or religious organization, including religious services or activities.

(c) An order issued in violation of this section is void and unenforceable.

SECTION 2. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 58-2-107, is amended by adding the following as a new subsection:

(n) During a state of emergency, major disaster, or natural disaster, the state, a political subdivision, or a public official shall not prohibit, or impose

additional restrictions on, the lawful operations of a church or religious organization, including religious services or activities.

SECTION 3. This act takes effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it.